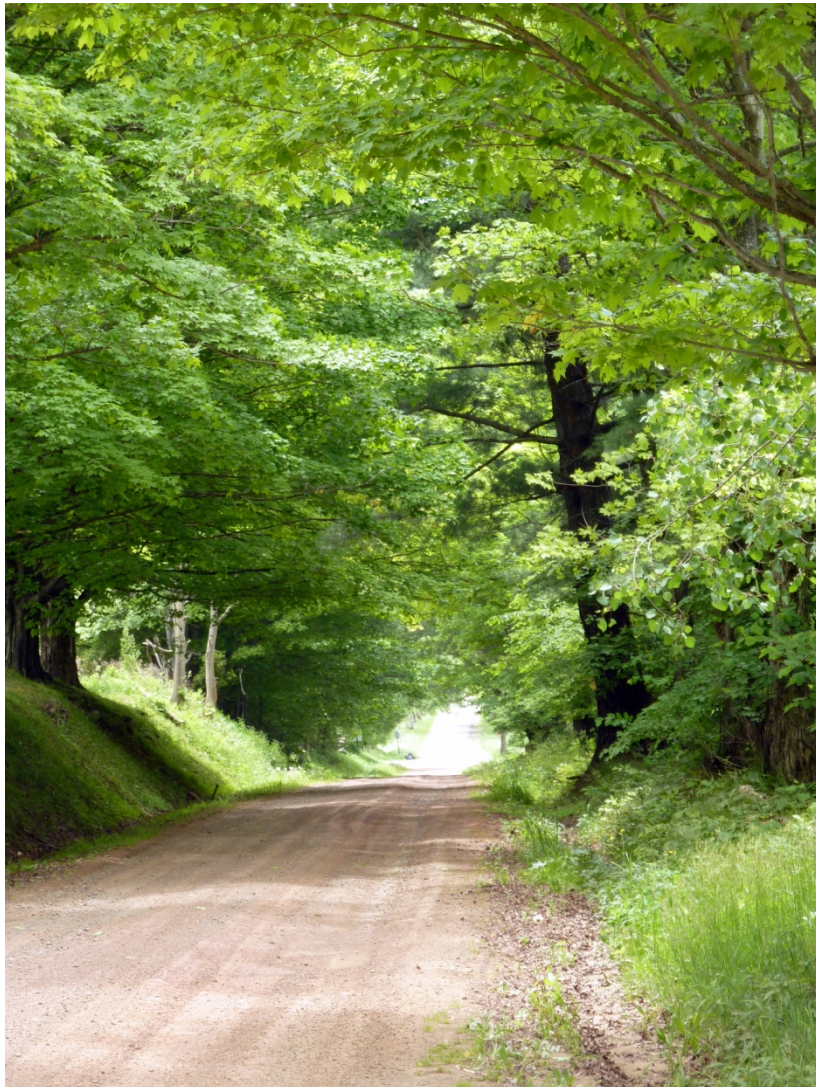


A Civil War Story – The 150<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Bucktails;  
A 150 Years Later

*My Journey through a surprising family history experience*



Compiled by Christine A. Holley with contributions by Richard Baker & Tom Harges

# A Civil War Story - The 150<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Bucktails

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The discovery of history and family began to unfold before me beginning in 2013 - 150 years after a very significant event. This amazing story began when my son started a basic family tree on "Ancestry.com". He asked me some questions about dates, family members and connections from the past and soon I took over the tree. As my research unfolded, I learned much more about a great great grandfather, than I ever thought I would. He was Lorenzo Hodges of Annin, McKean County, PA. In that process, I also met a family member who would share a long abandoned story of my grandfather's sacrifice in the Battle of Gettysburg – 150 years ago.

I had plenty of other ancestors to research and to find a place for on my family tree, but Grandfather Hodges kept pulling me back to his page. Lorenzo Hodges was the sixth, of ten children of Joseph Hodges and his wife, Nancy Elliott Hodges. Joseph Hodges was born in Somerset, Windham County, Vermont and was the youngest of his parents' nine children. At the age of 17, Joseph and Nancy were married in Lisle, Broome County, NY and soon headed for the timber rich forests of Annin Creek, McKean County, PA where they began their new life and large family.

My mother (Elnora Elsie Simpson) had given us a very brief background of her great grandfather Lorenzo and yet she didn't really know much about him at all, other than he had died at Gettysburg. She had what she believed was a



button from a shirt or uniform that was to be taken back to his wife if he didn't survive his service, along with the promise to care for his family. One day while on "Ancestry.com", I happened to see a copy of Lorenzo's picture; the very same picture that my mother owned, already posted on Ancestry! Back in the 1960's a "step-relative" had written to my mother from across the country and sent her this picture of her great grandfather, Lorenzo, who had died in battle. Fortunately, my mother had kept these letters and when I found them, the pieces started to fall into place. I contacted the person who had posted "our" photo and he turned out to be a direct descendant of Julius Hodges, brother to my Lorenzo, who is seen seated beside him in this photo. Mr. Richard Baker, who at that time was from Ohio, is the great grandson of Julius. He said that this photo was taken in Washington, DC – a fact that was verified by the letters from our "step-family". All we ever knew was that Lorenzo was on the left side of this photo. Somehow we thought that seated beside him, was a friend from back home but now we "met" a great grand uncle. My new cousin (a 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, 1 time removed) had wonderful documentation and stories to share of

Lorenzo's brother Julius. Julius contracted malaria while the brothers were stationed in Washington, DC and this caused the two brothers to become separated from each other. This kept Julius in a separate detail from his brother at the time of Gettysburg. Mr. Baker told of the parents, Joseph & Nancy Hodges, who like so many parents had lost a son at Gettysburg. In addition, Richard told me that their family had always wondered what had happened to the two little daughters who were left without a father as a result of this terrible war. The stories of Julius's family and Lorenzo's family were now unfolding - coming full circle 150 years later. There are times when research or connections in ancestry or genealogy give you chills and this was certainly one of them. My GG Grandfather (age 25 at the time of his death) wanted his story told and we were able to document it and honor a brave young soldier - the father of two very small little girls, Elnora Elsie & Agnes Aroa Hodges.

My Mother was 94 years old in 2013 and was just learning this portion of her family history. It was a wonderful experience to give her the gift of this story, a story that joins these two families. We now had a wonderful new cousin and branches of families that we never knew existed. She seemed pleased to finally know of this missing chapter in her life.

As July 1, 2013 approached, the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Civil War was commemorated in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania - a fact that sort of snuck up on me. I am honored to be a direct descendant of Sgt. Lorenzo Hodges of the PA 150<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Co. G – known as the "Pennsylvania Bucktails". The PA 150<sup>th</sup> and 150 years ago – I thought that was pretty significant!

Lorenzo, Julius and brother-in-law Wilson W. Tubbs, all joined the Army together on August 18, 1862 for a period of 3 years and served in Company G of the Bucktails Regiment, enlisting in Smethport, McKean Co. PA. They received a sign on bounty of \$25.00 and the promise of \$75.00 at the end of the war and 160 acres of land. Their pay during the war was only \$13.00 a month. Hodges cousins, Alvin and Henry M. Kinney also enlisted in Company G of the 150<sup>th</sup>. Alvin died in captivity at Andersonville, and his brother, Henry came home from Chancellorsville 100 lbs lighter than his normal 230 lbs. In this one small Pennsylvania community of Annin Creek, an example of great loss can be seen in just one family. <sup>1</sup>On the occasion of a DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Grave Marking ceremony for Naamah Holcomb Kinney's gravesite, her granddaughter, Mary Charlotte Simpson spoke of the grandsons that Naamah Kinney had, who fought in the war. "One son, Levi, was captain through the Civil War. One grandson, Alanson Tyler Kinney, was a cook in the Civil War, and one of the bodyguards to accompany the immortal Lincoln to his last resting place. Six other grandsons offered their lives on this country's altar; two of them rest in Andersonville. Those at home were loyal Union workers."\* Delivered by Mary Charlotte Simpson, date believed to be 22 May 1926, Annin Cemetery, Annin, PA.

Sadly, my GG Grandfather, Lorenzo was wounded on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863, having been shot three times (chest, hip & left hand). Though mortally wounded, Lorenzo was taken prisoner by the Confederates in the McPherson barn. <sup>2</sup>All in all, when the battle was over, the Bucktails suffered losses of 43 men that had been killed, 108 wounded and 70 that were taken prisoner. <sup>3</sup>The position was overrun by overwhelming numbers of Confederate infantry on afternoon of July 1, stranding scores of wounded Union soldiers. These men lay unattended until July 6 when the barn and other McPherson buildings were hastily transformed into an emergency field hospital. Julius found his brother wounded and in pain and was able to remain there caring for him, while his own regiment moved on. According to the pension file of Lorenzo Hodges, he was moved at some point to the Catholic Church Hospital of Gettysburg. <sup>4</sup>On a recent trip to Gettysburg, I found the St. Francis Xavier Catholic church that was that very same field hospital. This is where he died from his gunshot wound in his chest. Lorenzo died in Julius's arms on July 16, 1863.



This is a very moving story about the devotion of these two brothers and the compassion demonstrated by their commanders. After Lorenzo died, Julius felt obligated to move out immediately to rejoin his regiment. Both of these brave men served with honor and distinction. Sgt. Lorenzo Hodges is buried with honor, at Gettysburg in section #18, PA section; row C, lot #38, very close to where President Lincoln gave his famous Gettysburg Address.

Julius went on to live a very distinguished life back in Annin Creek, PA in service to his community. The story of these two brothers from one generation and two sisters from another generation, that had their lives impacted by the Civil War, is rich with a Hodges family history of kindness and openness to anyone in need. Julius was a member of the G. A. R (Grand Army of the Republic) Post No. 431 in Port Allegany, PA where he could be with and share his Civil War experiences with other veterans of the War of the Rebellion.



\*Photos of Julius Hodges GAR Ribbon & PA Bucktails medal were a gracious gift of Richard Baker.



Elnora Elsy Hodges



Agnes Aroa Hodges



Rosetta Coon Hodges



My mother Elnora Simpson Trax (mainly known as Betsy) was named for her grandmother, Elnora Elsy Hodges. Little Elnora Hodges, was 1 year and 9 months old at the time of her father's death and her sister, Agnes Hodges, was just a little over 5 yrs. old. Their mother Rosetta Coon Hodges, after being widowed, remarried in April of 1866 to Benjamin Delmage (a Civil War Veteran) and soon gave birth to 3 more daughters, Patience, Gertrude, & Jennie Rosetta Delmage. The stress of preserving the family farm and keeping the family together began to take its toll. In 1871 Agnes & Elnora were placed in the Civil War Orphans School of Mercer County, PA, but were occasionally allowed to spend time with their Uncle Julius, a most kind and gracious uncle and his family in Annin Creek, PA. Rosetta & her husband Benjamin Delmage decided to move to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1874. At this point Lorenzo's daughters became separated. Agnes was signed out of the orphanage to accompany her mother and Benjamin to Minnesota with two of the three half-sisters (leaving Jennie behind with the Hargraves' family) & Elnora returning to Annin Creek to live with her Uncle Julius.

Tragedy struck again, when Rosetta became ill with typhoid fever just two months after arriving in Minneapolis, Minn. (now 1874). She died at the age of 35. By 1883 Benjamin was able to purchase 154 acres in MN. Several years later, the family traveled with Benjamin Delmage, to Iowa and then on to the territory of Washington. By now Agnes had assumed the role of "mother" to her younger sisters.

Back in Annin Creek, Pennsylvania, Elnora married a handsome young man from a neighboring farm, named Andrew Simpson. They were married in a double wedding with her cousin, Elizabeth "Betsey" Hodges and her fiancé, Eli Buckley at the home of Julius Hodges in Oct. 1878. In the 1880 Census she is listed as, "Nora Simpson", the migration then takes Elnora/Nora and Andrew to New York State. Julius and his family lost track of his nieces, Agnes and Elnora and as always, life went on.

Now, 150 years later, the generous spirit of the Great Grandson of Julius and the curiosity of the Great- Great Granddaughter of Lorenzo, have come together to share the accurate account of what happened to the two sisters and the promise of two brothers serving their country with the 150<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Pennsylvania Bucktails. It just amazes me that 150 years later, this story unfolds and I feel truly honored to share it.

Christine A. Holley  
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### Epilogue –

On December 30, 2014, my mother, Elnora Elsie Simpson Trax passed away at the age of 95 years, 8 months and 27 days. I was pleased that I could introduce her to the events and history of the family that she never knew. Perhaps she was able to better understand the personality of her grandmother, Elnora Elsie Hodges Simpson. Thank you to my GG Grandfather, Lorenzo Hodges for your encouragement from afar, as you helped me to research and write your story.

CAH / Jan 2015



### References:

<sup>1</sup> Mary Charlotte Simpson – Speech to the DAR at the grave marking of Naamah Holcomb Kinney circa 1926

<sup>2</sup> *History of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, Second Regiment, Bucktail Brigade* by (author) Thomas Chamberlin

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.civilwarwiki.net/wiki/McPherson\\_Farm\\_\(Gettysburg\)](http://www.civilwarwiki.net/wiki/McPherson_Farm_(Gettysburg))

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.stfxcc.org/hospital.html>